

**My Influential Person:
Charles Monroe "Sparky" Schulz**

"Life is like an ice-cream cone, you have to lick it one day at a time."

-Charles M.Schulz

Childhood



November 26, 1922. This is the day Charles Schulz was born as the son of Dena Halverson Schulz (His Mother), and Carl Fred Schulz (His Father) at home at 919 Chicago Avenue South, #2, Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2 days after he was born, he was given the nickname, Sparky after the racehorse character Sparky Plug who was featured in the popular newspaper comic strip, Barney Google (And the nickname would stick with him throughout his life). Schulz loved to draw when he was young. He drew between pins and tacks, to their family dog, Spike. In 1937, at the age of 15, Schulz sent a drawing of his dog, Spike to "Ripley's Believe It or Not!", and was featured in Robert Ripley's syndicated panel.

"Try not to have a good time... this is supposed to be educational."

-Charles M. Schulz

After Childhood

In February 1943, Schulz's mother died because of colon cancer (Something Schulz also got later on, but we'll get to that later). And things were getting worse from there as around the same time, Schulz ended up being drafted into the United States Army to serve as a Staff Sergeant for World War 2. And he didn't return home until 1945. And when he came home, he wanted to do his passion. Become a cartoonist.

"I love mankind; it's people I can't stand"

-Charles M. Schulz

Comic Striping Business



After becoming an employee at Art Instruction, Schulz began his cartooning career. However, he did not start with Peanuts right off the bat. He was a cartoonist doing Li'L Folks for the St. Paul Pioneer Press (Later on the Saturday Evening Post) from June 1947 to January 1950.

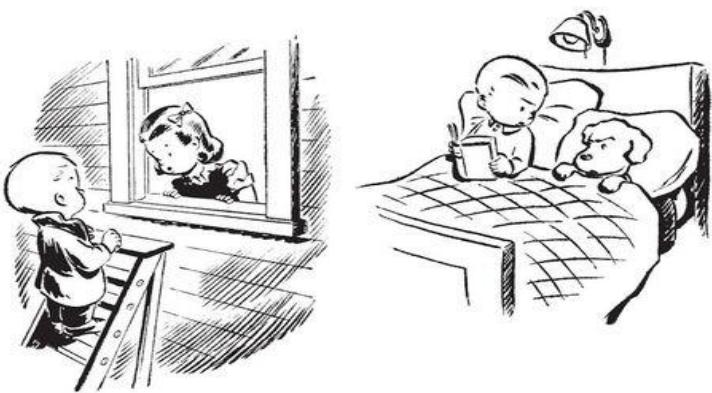
Li'l Folks

BY SPARKY



"We been playin' tag."

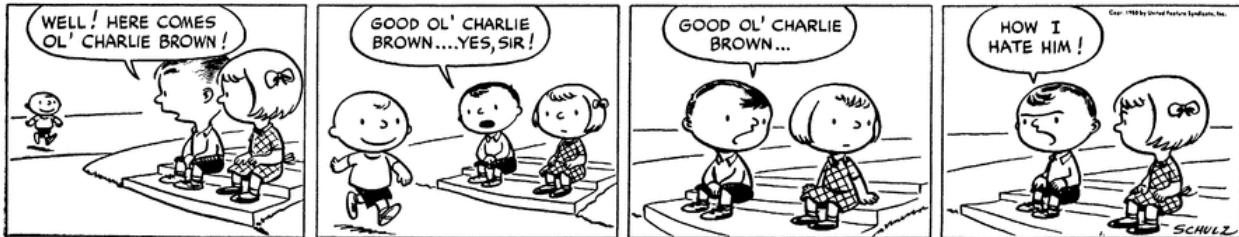
"Oh, rats, you never want to do anything."



"I always read in bed so might just as well
get used to it!"

Here's an example of how the looked. They had 4 separate panels with an illustration and a joke

Around the same time, he tried to have Li'l Folks syndicated through the Newspaper Enterprise Association; Schulz would have been an independent contractor for the syndicate, unheard of in the 1940s, but the deal fell through. So, Li'l Folks was dropped from the Pioneer Press in January 1950. Later in 1950, Schulz approached United Feature Syndicate with Li'l Folks and the syndicate became interested in it and bought it. And on October 2, 1950, Peanuts first appeared in newspapers.



The first Peanuts strip from October 2, 1950

Back when it first started, Peanuts originally appeared in only 7 newspapers. These newspapers were The Washington Post, The Chicago Tribune, The Minneapolis Star-Tribune, The Allentown Call-Chronicle, The Bethlehem Globe-Times, The Denver Post, and The Seattle Times. But overtime, the strip got more and more popular and ended up appearing in over 2,600 newspapers. Schulz even abandoned a different comic he did, It's Only A Game, because of its success. Now, you might be wondering, How does Schulz do this? Well, I'll tell you. First, the tools. The Strips are drawn on Strathmore 3-ply paper with India ink. For lettering, Schulz used a Speedball C-5 pen and for drawing the strip he used an Esterbrook 914 radio pen (He uses them so much to the point when he learned that the company that manufactured the nibs for this pen was going out of business, he purchased their entire inventory of nibs).



An example of all of

the materials Schulz needed

For the paper, The daily Peanuts strip templates evolved quite a bit over the years. In the beginning, Schulz had templates that were 27 x 5.5 inches and pre-divided into four panels. In Leap Year 1988, he had a smaller rectangular template of 19 x 5.5 inches that he could divide into panels however he wished. Next, the time working. Schulz worked his office from Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm (which is 8 hours). Normally, Schulz drew 7 strips per week roughly 6 to 8 weeks ahead of when the strip would come out. Schulz can draw a daily strip from 10 minutes to an hour. The Sundays were when Schulz took longer. He would first make it in black and white and then Schulz would have a copy of the strip produced at a local print shop. Then, using a color chart, he would select colors for each portion and send the syndicate a colored version along with corresponding color number IDs. At the bottom, there is the

example from the original print of the Sunday strip, and the colorized copy that appeared in Sunday newspapers



The original
print of the October 20, 1963 Sunday strip that can be found in The Complete Peanuts



The Colorized print of the October 20, 1963 Sunday Strip. With the only difference is
the color



Schulz was always working. Compared to other cartoonists, he would never take vacations from the strip. The only time Schulz took a vacation from working on the Strip when he was not retired, was in late 1997, when Schulz took a 5 week break to celebrate his 75th Birthday. And the newspapers ran reruns throughout it.

Personal Life



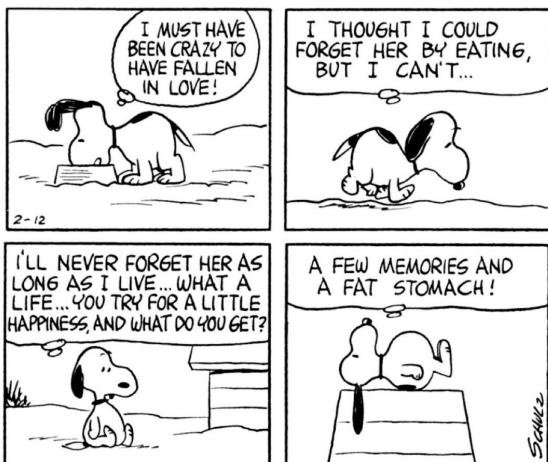
Charles and Jean Schulz. Picture from the Charles Schulz Museum and Research Center

When Schulz wasn't busy drawing at his desk, he would be with his family. Schulz has been married twice. He first got married to Joyce Halverson in 1951 and Schulz adopted her daughter,

Meredith. They moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado the same year . Their first child was born in February 1952 and later, 3 other children were born. In 1969, Schulz moved to Santa Rosa, California and lived there until he died. By Thanksgiving 1970, it was clear they're marriage was not doing so hot as Schulz had an affair with another woman. And in 1972, the two divorced. A year later, Schulz married Jean Forsyth after they met earlier when Jean took her daughter to the same rink Schulz went to. And they were married until Schulz died.

Falling Health

In 1981, Schulz was feeling tightness in his stomach. The doctors discovered a blockage in Schulz's arteries. Schulz had to do heart bypass surgery to clear it. Around the 80's, the lines on the characters looked shakier. That was because Schulz was having problems with his hand to the point he had to hold his wrist to draw. Here is an example between the 60's and the 90's.



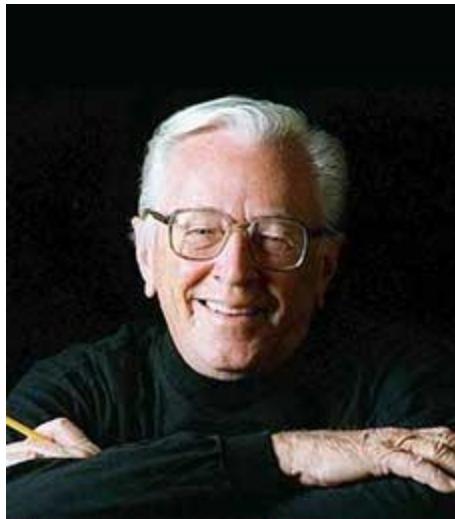
The 60's



The 90's

In November 1999, a stroke landed Schulz in the hospital. As doctors discovered Schulz had colon cancer in his body. They were able to get some of it out, but the cancer has metastasized into his body and robbed him out of being a writer. He couldn't see straight, he couldn't remember words easily and he had a slim 20% chance of living due to it.

Retirement as a Cartoonist



On December 14, 1999, Schulz announced his retirement.

Having over 52 years of being a cartoonist. With him making the final strips of Peanuts before he retires. On January 3, 2000. The last Peanuts daily strip was put out in newspapers. It's similar to the last strip in general, but we'll get to it. On the strip, the only thing there was Snoopy on his doghouse with his typewriter. Next to him was a letter from Charles Schulz that was typed on a computer (except for his signature) due to his falling health. It said:

**“Dear Friends,
I have been fortunate to draw Charlie Brown and friends for almost 50 years. It has been the fulfillment of my childhood ambition.
Unfortunately, I am no longer able to maintain the schedule demanded by a daily comic strip, therefore I am announcing my retirement.
I have been grateful over the years for the loyalty of our editors and the wonderful support and love expressed to me by the fans of the comic strip. Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, Lucy... how can I ever forget them ...”**

-Charles M. Schulz

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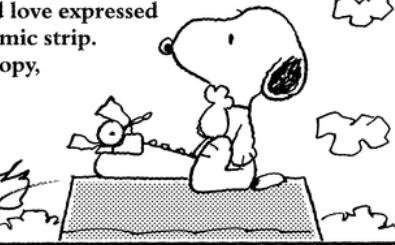
Unfortunately, I am no longer able to maintain the schedule demanded by a daily comic strip, therefore I am announcing my retirement.

1-3-00

I have been grateful over the years for the loyalty of our editors and the wonderful support and love expressed to me by fans of the comic strip.

Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, Lucy...how can I ever forget them....

Charles M. Schulz



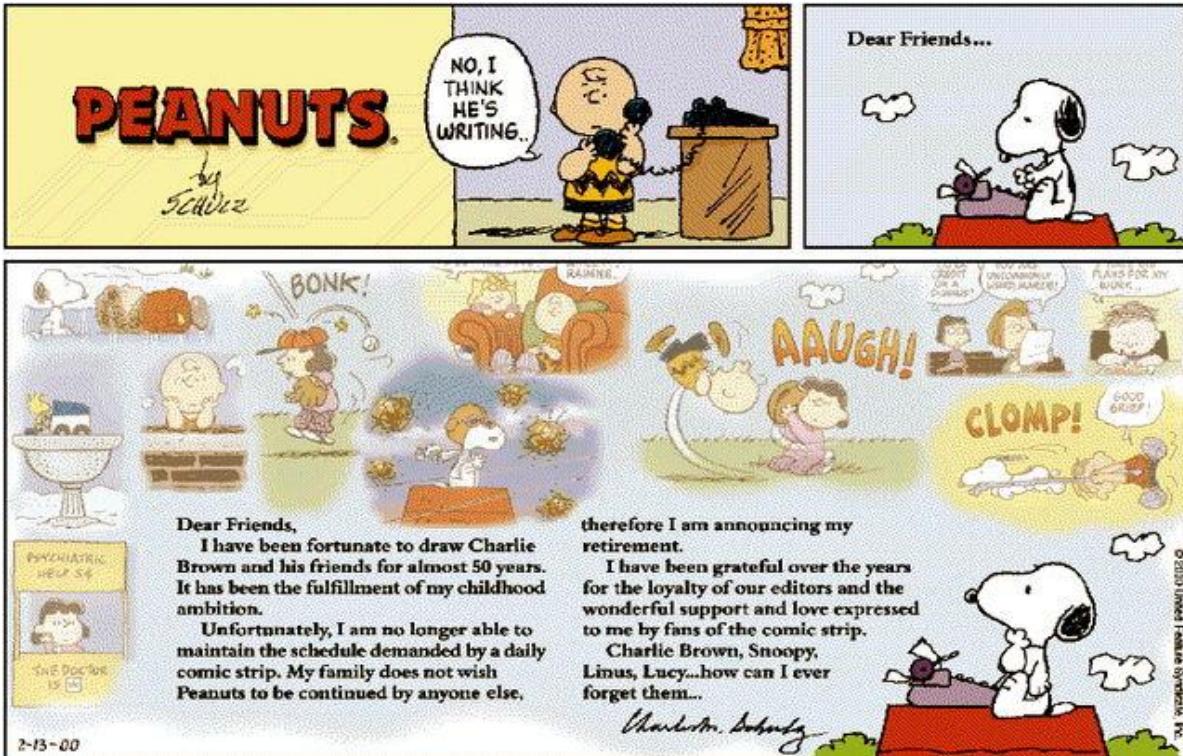
Schulz ended the dallies, with the future dallies being reruns of older comics. Not from the 50's. But from the good spot, around the 60's and 70's. But Schulz still had to take care of one more thing. The Sundays. Schulz made 6 more Sundays featuring the last appearances of some characters. But Schulz had to stop with the Sundays as well. So he made a final Sunday strip that will come in the next chapter. And after that, Schulz put down his pen for the last time, ending his career as a cartoonist

Death

On February 12, 2000, It was raining in Santa Rosa, California. Schulz went to bed a little after 9 pm. And at around 9:45 pm, Schulz died in his sleep at home due to a heart attack. Just a few hours before the final Peanuts strip for good reached newspapers. But Schulz thought anyway that the comic would outlive him due to strips being made 6 to 8 weeks before they hit the newspapers. With it saying:

“Dear Friends,
I have been fortunate to draw Charlie Brown and friends for almost 50 years. It has been the fulfillment of my childhood ambition.
Unfortunately, I am no longer able to maintain the schedule demanded by a daily comic strip. My family does not wish Peanuts to be continued by anyone else, therefore I am announcing my retirement. I have been grateful over the years for the loyalty of our editors and the wonderful support and love expressed to me by the fans of the comic strip. Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, Lucy... how can I ever forget them ...”

-Charles M. Schulz



In total for the beginning of the strip (October 2, 1950) to the end of the strip (February 13, 2000), In the timespan of 49 years and 4 months of it running in newspapers, Schulz had made a total of 17,897 comics. With 15,391 dailies and 2,506 Sundays made for the strip. Making it the longest running comic strip of all time (At least for now). The final strip was a colorized version of the last daily strip, with a few extra like the beginning of it which reused another Sunday's beginning card. And in the letter Schulz said he didn't want his comic to be continued by anyone else (It would make sense as if he did do that, the writer wouldn't have made the strip as sharp as Schulz did. And would also make the characters do things that Schulz did NOT want to do).

The Legacy



Schulz's Congress Gold Medal

It's been almost 2 decades since Schulz died and Peanuts ended and as time moved on, it would be unlikely that people will completely forget about Peanuts all together, but it's the opposite. Peanuts is still in the newspapers, just in reruns, and people are still discovering Peanuts and enjoying it (and I don't wanna brag but I'm so much of a Peanuts fan I got all 50 years of comics). And in animation, the latest Peanuts piece of media, The Peanuts Movie, did very well. So Schulz's legacy of being one of the most influential people in the world will still live on

"Be yourself. No one can say you're doing it wrong"

-Charles M. Schulz

Pictures taken from the Charles Schulz Museum and the Charles Schulz Museum and Research Center